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UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 001203

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF, AF/E, AND DRL;
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTIAN PARLIAMENT REQUESTS
POSTPONEMENT OF REGIONAL ELECTIONS

REF: DJIBOUTI 1158

1. (U) The Djiboutian Information Agency (ADI) published a press release 30 November reporting the passing of a resolution by the Djiboutian National Assembly to postpone upcoming regional elections, scheduled for 30 December. The proposed resolution stated first that the resolution provided proof the Government was dedicated to organizing regional elections as quickly as possible and in doing so, establish democracy in the interior districts of the country. It also noted the Government's desire to involve its citizens in the management of public affairs to ensure maximum transparency.

2. (U) The resolution indicated parliamentary concern that the registration period for persons to submit their candidacy and the time allowed to make the population aware of the election was extremely short. In addition, some members expressed concern about the need to harmonize the two decentralization laws, regarding the structure of regional governing bodies in the interior districts and the special status of the City of Djibouti, prior to regional elections. The resolution requested that President Ismail Omar Guelleh postpone community and regional elections until, at the latest, the end of February. The National Assembly vote approved this resolution and it has been sent to the President of the Republic for consideration.

3. (SBU) Comment: The resolution shows that members of the National Assembly appear to have taken into consideration proposals a USAID-sponsored team of International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES) decentralization experts submitted to the Speaker of the Parliament. The importance of voter education and awareness was at the forefront of these proposals. End Comment.